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**Theology and the Scientific Imagination from the Middle Ages to the Seventeenth Century.**  
**Amos Funkenstein**

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Review

Reviewed Work(s): Theology and the Scientific Imagination from the Middle Ages to the Seventeenth Century by Amos Funkenstein

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churches. The problems of Gothic construction come alive at Canterbury, Auxerre, Chartres, and elsewhere, as cathedrals were rebuilt, arguably with the help of the volunteer work of a devoted congregation. A selection from William of Durand's *Rationale divinorum officiorum* suggests the symbolism associated with church building, while the regulations for those practicing the arts and trades in Paris set the practical standards for the era of Louis IX.

The second section shifts to more secular matters. Villani chronicled urban planning in Florence: the building of bridges, pavements, and the square as well as religious structures. Commissions for religious works in the fourteenth century were still abundant, as the records for Andrea Pisano and contract for Duccio attest or the contemporary inscriptions and descriptions of Simone Martini's works in Siena and Avignon. In London the enlargement, decoration, and financial accounts of the royal palace at Westminster are excerpted. The payments laconically indicate the cost, quality, and types of materials as well as the miserable salaries of the artists.

The third section reveals bequests for royal or ducal tombs, which furnish us with instructions, for example, for Claus Sluter and his workshop.

Inevitably one will compare Frisch's *Gothic Art* with the compendium of sources edited by the late Elizabeth Holt (volume 1 reprinted by Princeton University Press, 1981). There are many overlaps. For a few dollars more, Holt added the major Renaissance sources through Dürer and illustrations, which include the best bits of Villard de Honnecourt. Ideally the student should have both books, since Holt does not include the regulations for artists in France and England or the descriptions of Villani or payments to Sluter and entourage. Holt does, however, contribute citations from Bernard of Clairvaux, the *Marvels of Rome*, and the Belleville Breviary, which are lacking in Frisch. The scholarly apparatus is more complete in Frisch's book. It includes a bibliography at the end, in addition to the notes and indexes common to both books. It would have been a tribute to Frisch and a help to the harassed instructor if the publishers had brought the bibliography up to date. A few spotty examples are the G. K. Hall series of bibliographies on medieval art; recent symposia, for example, the 1986 symposium on Suger at the Metropolitan Museum of Art; Anita Moskowitz on the Pisani (1986); and a periodical dedicated to the study of Villard de Honnecourt.

CARLA LORD, Kean College of New Jersey

AMOS FUNKENSTEIN, *Theology and the Scientific Imagination from the Middle Ages to the Seventeenth Century*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986. Pp. xii, 421; black-and-white frontispiece. \$47.50.

This masterly book has a double claim to our attention. In describing changes that took place between the Middle Ages and the seventeenth century in accounts of three divine attributes — omnipresence, omnipotence, and providence — Professor Funkenstein has made an important contribution to the history of natural theology. He has done much more than this, however, for he deals in styles of secular theology that go beyond natural theology and the province of reason alone. In insisting, moreover, that by the early seventeenth century scientific and theological thinking had converged almost to a point, he has provided historians with a potential explanation of certain aspects of the scientific revolution that was to follow. These aspects cover by no means all of the scientific enterprise, but they are at least extremely fundamental: in brief, Funkenstein relates God's omnipresence to ideas of the unity and homogeneity of Nature. God's omnipotence clearly has some bearing on ideas of natural law — witness the traditional distinction between *potentia Dei absoluta* and

*potentia Dei ordinata*; and the notion of God's providence in history was then at the very root of authority, morality, and order.

The relationships between an increasingly secularized theology, on the one hand, and physics, history, and political thought, on the other, are inevitably intricate, and Funkenstein's book has a subtlety to match. In the chapter on divine omnipotence, for example, he explains in fine detail how Scholastic investigations of theoretical alternatives, "counterfactual orders of nature," led up to seventeenth-century formulations of such laws of nature as Galileo's. The typical historian of science will be less surprised by the conclusion as by the wealth of medieval philosophical material that is used in its support. In the chapter on divine providence Funkenstein's concern is more with a new philosophy of history that emerged in the seventeenth century, a new consciousness of the need to judge historical events in their context. Again, while Vico's name will come to the typical historian's mind, it would be an erudite reader indeed who could learn nothing from the account offered of ancient, medieval, and Renaissance precursors of history in this new style.

*Theology and the Scientific Imagination* is in some danger of being misrepresented, that is, as though it were primarily an explanation of the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century. It is rather a history of what, following Bertrand Russell, we might describe as the scientific philosophy of that period and its antecedents. The great names are those we should come across in a history of philosophy: Descartes and More, Hobbes, Spinoza, Malebranche, Newton and Clarke, Leibniz, Vico, and Kant all have a large place in it. Relatively little attention is given to the alternative problem of relating philosophical belief and fashion to concrete scientific advances. This is less of a criticism than a suggestion as to ways in which the book's main theses might be extended further by others and perhaps qualified where practice belied philosophical window dressing. To put a specimen point very crudely: Newton's philosophical views from the turn of the century are of great interest in themselves, but their relevance to, and importance in forming, his scientific activities in the 1660s and 1670s is something that remains to be proved.

In a sense the key chapter in the book is one in which it is argued that, largely as a result of the debates already considered, a new attitude to knowledge arose in the seventeenth century: knowing, it is argued, was equated with doing. One could best know nature, or human society, if one were able to construct it or reconstruct it — rather along the lines of God's primordial construction, which of course came of knowledge. Here again is an idea that begs to be filled out with historical examples from the "mechanical philosophy," but Funkenstein does not attempt the exercise, and his book remains a history of philosophy, or rather of the twin philosophies of science and society. As such, it is a model of intellectual history, well written and documented with very many texts lying off the beaten track. Princeton University Press has in turn produced a suitably handsome volume, and it would be an unforgiving Belgian who held it against the press's proofreader that the name of the philosopher Geulincx is consistently misspelled.

J. D. NORTH, University of Groningen

MANFRED GERWING, *Malogranatum oder der dreifache Weg zur Vollkommenheit: Ein Beitrag zur Spiritualität des Spätmittelalters*. (Veröffentlichungen des Collegium Carolinum, 57.) Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1986. Pp. 312. DM 78.

Contemporary scholarship on medieval spirituality is resurrecting a wealth of coeval religious texts from obscurity and neglect. A fourteenth-century Latin tract composed